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that, if they are willing to accept the suggestion.

The PRESIDENT: The suggestion is a very good one.

The PRESIDENT: I feel like congratulating you this morning upon the program for this fourth session, the general theme being: "Children and young people; their conditions at home, in the school and in the library." No matter how splendid a structure may be reared nor how beautiful it may be, without an adequate foundation it is most insecure. We have learned to realize in library work that we must begin at the beginning if our work is to have any perpetuity or any permanent result. We feel that, splendid and admirable in every way as the work with the adults is, that that alone is not enough. That work invites, as it deserves, our respect and admiration, but in the work with children is centered our affection. And when I say this I do not mean to intimate for one moment that that work is enveloped in sentiment. I believe most firmly that the work with children is constructive work of the very highest order. If there are any in this audience who doubt that I am sure that after we shall have heard the papers of this morning the doubts will be dispelled. We shall have this work in three volumes this morning, the first volume comprising two chapters. The title of the first volume is *The Education of Children and the Conservation of their Interests*, and Chapter One will be contributed by Miss FAITH E. SMITH, of the Chicago public library, on

I. CHANGING CONDITIONS OF CHILD LIFE

It is now twenty-eight years since some one first recognized the fact that children needed to have special libraries or special collections of books in libraries, and thereupon opened a children's reading room in New York City.

Some of the conditions affecting child life today existed then, but we know more about them now than we did then. We

have many specialists in sociological fields who are making investigations, compiling statistics, drawing conclusions, and telling other people how to make the world a better place. Our rapid industrial development is producing many problems concerning child welfare, some of which are of vital interest to us as library workers; others we may well leave to playground associations, juvenile courts, health bureaus, social settlements, child labor committees, schools and churches. It is not ours to change housing conditions or to do away with child labor, but it is ours to meet these conditions, to be god-parents to those whose natural parents are not inclined or not able to guide their reading, to present to the children's minds other worlds than the tenement or street, and to give to children worn with daily labor such books as will be within their grasp, and will help them to permanent happiness.

In 1885 when a children's library was opened by Miss Hanaway in New York City, there were fewer means of recreation than there are now. There were no motion-picture shows, no children's theaters, no municipal recreation parks with free gymnasiums, swimming pools and baths. Child labor had only begun to be exploited by large manufacturing establishments (1879). Then there were more homes, permanent abiding places, where there was room for children both to work and to play. There was more family life, where father and mother and children gathered about the evening lamp, and father read aloud while mother sewed and the children listened, or where each member of the family had his own book in which to lose himself. There were daily duties for each of the children, the performance of which gave them training in habits of responsibility.

Today such conditions may be found only rarely, except in small cities and villages.

Congestion in large cities has led even well-to-do families to live in apartment houses. In Chicago this sort of life began only thirty-four years ago, and today one-

third of all that city live in residences having six families per main entrance. (Chicago City Club-Housing exhibit.) This tendency to apartment life means the loss of the joy of ownership, the feeling of not-at-homeness and consequent restlessness, due to frequent change of environment.

Book agents say that they cannot sell books to families in apartment houses, because they have no room for books. Scott Nearing in his "Woman and social progress" regrets "the woeful lack of provision for the needs of the child in the construction of the modern city home. Huge real estate signs advertise the bathroom, bedrooms, the dining room and kitchen, the library, and reception hall. But where is the children's room? Owners do not care to rent houses to people having children. Many of the apartment houses exclude children as they exclude dogs or other objectionable animals." Yet we say, and rightly, that this is the century of the child.

The complexity of modern life, the tendency to materialism, the multiplicity of interests, have deterred many parents from being actively concerned in the growth of the minds and the souls of their children. This part of their development is being left to teachers, church workers, leaders of boys' and girls' clubs, etc. There is not time for reading aloud to children at home, and little concern is manifested by many intelligent parents, regarding their children's choice of books. The "poor, neglected children of the rich" are not allowed to use the public library books, because there may be germs hidden among the leaves. They may have their own books, but they are denied the joy of reading a book that some other boy or girl has read and pronounced "swell".

Because of this lack of concern on the part of parents in children's reading, are we not justified in our hitherto condemned paternalism?

Home life among the very poor in the congested districts of our large cities is often such as is not worth the name. The practice of taking lodgers which prevails among some foreign elements of the popu-

lation, means the undermining of family life, and often the breaking down of domestic standards. (Veiler, "Housing reform," p. 33.) "Thousands of children in Chicago alone are being exposed to the demoralizing influences of overcrowded rooms, of inadequate sanitary provisions, and of unavoidable contact with immoral persons."

"Bad housing is associated with the worst conditions in politics, poverty, population density, tuberculosis, and retardation in the schools. It is directly related to many cases of delinquency of boys and girls, who have been brought before the juvenile court." (Breckenridge and Abbott, "The delinquent child and the home.")

Furthermore wrong home conditions result in driving children to the street. The child who finds no room at home to do the things that he wishes to do, not even room to study his school lessons, is inevitably forced into the street, "not only in the day time, but as common observation shows, until late at night, not only in good weather but in foul." Here he grows up, and is educated "with fatal precision." The saloon and its victims, the hoboes and their stories, criminals dodging the police, lurid signboards, a world of money-getting, all become only too familiar to him. Sin loses its sinfulness, and gains in interest and excitement.

Are we placing our attractive children's rooms, clean and orderly, adorned with flowers and fine pictures, where they may be readily seen from the street, where picture books placed in the windows may vie in alluring powers with the nickel-novel window displays?

The boy of the street may be a member of a boys' gang, and if so, this becomes one of the great influences acting upon his life, either for good or for ill. Mr. Puffer makes the statement that three-fourths of all boys are members of gangs. (Puffer, "The boy and his gang," p. 9.)

Those boys are fortunate whose gang is an organized body efficiently directed, such as the Boys' Scout Patrol. This, Mr. Puffer says, "is simply a boys' gang, systematized,

overseen, affiliated with other like bodies, made efficient and interesting, as boys alone could never make it, and yet everywhere, from top to bottom a gang." Here lies an opportunity for co-operation on the part of the library, and many are the interests awakened by the Boy Scout movement which may be encouraged by the library.

Another influence constantly appealing to children of the street as well as to others, is the glaring advertisement of the moving-picture show. Moving pictures are now the most important form of cheap amusement in this country; they reach the young, immigrants, family groups, the formative and impressionable section of our cities, as no other form of amusement, and can not but be vital influences for good or ill. In 1910 it was estimated that more than half a million children attended motion pictures daily. (Juvenile Protective Assn. of Chicago, "Five and ten-cent theaters"—pamphlet.)

Is it not possible for the library to make permanent whatever good, though fleeting, impression may be made by educational pictures or pictures from great books, by co-operating with the picture shows, and being ready to supply to the children copies of the stories, nature books, or histories to which the children may have been attracted by the motion pictures?

During the meetings this week our interest in the adult immigrants and their relation to the library has been aroused and augmented, and it has been proven conclusively that the solution of the immigrant problem must of necessity rest with the children. The change in the type of immigration in recent years from a large percentage of English-speaking and Scandinavian races having a low percentage of illiteracy, to a leadership among races of eastern and southern Europe, with a very high percentage of illiteracy, has had a decided influence on standards of living.

These people of other lands do not adapt themselves to American ways as readily as their children. Many do not know the English language, they do not stir far from home or from work, and have few new ex-

periences. "Many things which are familiar to the child in the facts of daily intercourse, in the street or in the school, remain unintelligible to the father and mother. It has become a commonplace that this cheap wisdom on the part of the boy or girl leads to a reversal of the relationship between parent and child. The child who knows English is the interpreter who makes the necessary explanations for the mother to the landlord, the grocer, the sanitary inspector, the charity visitor, and the teacher or truant officer. It is the child again who often interviews the boss, finds the father a job, and sees him through the onerous task of 'joining the union.' The father and mother grow accustomed to trusting to the child's version of what 'they all do in America,' and gradually find themselves at a disadvantage in trying to maintain parental control. The child develops a sense of superiority towards the parent and a resulting disregard of those parental warnings which, although they are not based on American experience, rest on common notions of right and wrong, and would, if heeded, guard the child." (Breckenridge and Abbott, "The delinquent child and the home.")

Can books not teach children to honor their father and mother, and "that the head and the hoof of the Law, and the haunch and the hump is **obey**"?

We are told that one of the causes of crime among the children of foreigners is transmitted ambition. "The father left the homeland because he was not satisfied. . . . He worked hard and saved money, that the dream of better things might be realized. . . . The son manifests this innate tendency by a desire to excell, by the longings to rise and be masterful, the ambition to beat the other fellow—these are the motives which impell him to an intensive life that carries him to excess and transgression." (Roberts, "The new immigration," p. 325.)

It is for us to interest this ambition and turn it into right channels. We may also discover what special interests are uppermost in the minds of those of different

nationalities, things they wish their children to love, traditions they have cherished, and which we may help the children to cherish.

Driven by necessity or by the spirit of the age, the immigrant quickly develops a strong ambition for acquiring money, supposing that he landed on our shores without that impelling force. One of the consequences is that he withdraws his children from school as soon as they are old enough to secure their working papers. "To the Italian peasant, who, as a gloriously street laborer begins to cherish a vision of prosperity, it matters little whether his girls go to school or not. It is, on the contrary, of great importance that a proper dower be accumulated to get them good husbands; and to take them from school to put them to work is, therefore, only an attempt to help them accomplish this desirable end." (Breckenridge and Abbott.)

In 1911 the National Child Labor Committee conducted an investigation of tenement house work in New York City. Among 163 families visited having 213 children, 196 children ranging in ages from 3½ to 14 years were working on nuts, brushes, dolls' clothes, or flowers. These are truly not the good old-fashioned domestic industries in which children received a good part of their education. Those working in factories and tenement sweat shops, where labor is specialized and subdivided into innumerable operations, do not get the variety of employment that cultivates resourcefulness, alertness, endurance and skill. (Child labor bulletin, Nov., 1912.)

We cannot expect these children, with bodies retarded in development by overwork, and without proper nourishment, to be able to take the same mental food that is pleasing to other children of the same age, who have had all necessary physical care.

The hours when working children, those engaged in gainful occupations, and those who are helping in the homes, are free for recreation, are in the evening and on Sun-

day. Are we placing our most skilled workers on duty at these times, and are we opening our story hours and reading clubs on Sunday afternoons, when the minds of these children are most receptive of good things, when the children are dressed in their good clothes, their self-respect is high, and they are free from responsibility?

It is a well-known fact that the need of money is not the only cause of the exodus from school that occurs in the grades. An investigation made by the Commissioner of Labor in 1910 (Condition of woman and child wage-earners in the U. S., vol. 7), examining the conditions of white children under 16, in five representative cities, showed that of those children interviewed, 169 left school because earnings were necessary, and 165 because dissatisfied with school. The Chicago Tribune (Nov. 11, 1912) stated that in 1912 there were in Chicago over 23,000 children between 14 and 16 years of age, who were not in school. Over half of these were unemployed, and the remainder had employment half the time at ill-paid jobs, teaching little and leading nowhere. In 1912 there were 34,000 children of Philadelphia not in school, and only 13,000 were employed. (Philadelphia City Club Bulletin, Dec. 27, 1912.)

The curriculum of our public schools is in a transitional stage. The complaint of parents who take their children from school before they have completed the high school course, is that it does not teach them to earn a living. The desire of commercial men is to have such courses introduced as will lessen the need of apprentice training in their establishments. These changes may help boys and girls to earn a living, but those courses which teach them how to live may be sacrificed. Man does not live by bread alone. Mrs. Ella Flagg Young says, "The training must also implant in the mind a desire to become something—I mean by that an ideal. . . . It must make the boys and girls able to know that they have possibilities of greater development along many lines." This sort

of training is within the sphere of the library as well as within that of the schools.

The children in the rural districts (which the 1910 census interprets as meaning people of towns of less than 2,500 inhabitants, and people of the country) are the library's great opportunity. In these districts may be found the old-fashioned home life, where parents are glad to be aided in the direction of their children's reading. There are fewer distractions in the way of amusements. Books are not seen by the thousands, until they have become so confusing that one knows not what to read or where to begin. Homes are owned, instead of rented, and a library worker is not liable to lose her group of children each first of May.

The pleasures of city life have been made easily accessible to children and grown people by means of trolley lines, good roads, telephones, etc., and the music of grand opera has been carried to the country homes by means of talking machines. Still the distractions of modern life have not absorbed a large part of the everyday life of the children, so that their minds may be appealed to along the line of their natural interests. As Miss Stearns told us yesterday, there is less of drudgery in farm life today than there was thirty years ago, and children have more time for study and reading; but they need direction and assistance.

The consensus of opinion among writers on rural sociology is that the great need of the people of the country is more education; education that will make farming more scientific and efficient, and less fatiguing, education that will help boys and girls to find amusement in the life about them; education that will guide that passion for nature which every normal child possesses.

* * *

Because children today have many more opportunities for recreation than they had thirty years ago; because many leave school long before they have acquired the education that will teach them how to live, as well as how to earn a living; because

in many homes mothers and fathers cannot train their children in American ideals of citizenship, which they themselves do not understand; because in other homes the physical needs of children are held to be of most importance, while mental and moral needs are left to the care of teachers and social workers, the time seems ripe for the library to place emphasis upon the educational side of its work, rather than upon the recreative. Let the recreative be truly re-creative, giving relaxation, new visions, higher standards of living, and increased belief in one's self, but let the educational work meet the children's needs, increase their efficiency, teach them how to live, and to be of service in the world's work.

Mr. Bostwick, in the Children's section, mentioned three eras in library work with children; first, the era of children's books in libraries; second, era of children's room; third, era of children's department. These concerned books and organization, the machinery of getting the books to the children. We think we have learned something about children's books, and we know approved methods of administration. Possibly we are now on the verge of the fourth era, when we shall know children. Not the child with a capital C, a laboratory specimen, but living children, with hearts and souls. Do we know the conditions under which the children of our own neighborhood live? Do we understand their interests, and are we sanely sympathetic?

The PRESIDENT: We are glad to get Chapter Two: How the Library is Meeting these Conditions, by Miss GERTRUDE E. ANDRUS, of the Seattle public library.

II—HOW THE LIBRARY IS MEETING THE CHANGING CONDITIONS OF CHILD LIFE

Every month, if the mails are regular, we receive assurance that the public library is an integral part of public education, and the complacency with which we accept this assurance gives ample opportunity to our critics for those slings and arrows with which they are so ready. Ideas